

HISTORICAL SKETCH  
—OF THE—  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA.

—O—  
*With Early Reminiscences of the Place.*

—BY—  
J. L. WILLIAMS.

—O—  
Read Before the Congregation

OCTOBER 16, 1881,

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF ITS ORGANIZATION

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Williams, J. L.

Historical sketch of the  
First Presbyterian church...

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA.



*With Early Reminiscences of the Place.*



## A Lecture Before the Congregation

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It has not been the aim of this sketch to give a connected history of Fort Wayne. The incidental allusions to events which connect it with the earliest explorations, and with the dawnings of civilization in the northwest, cannot fail, however, to suggest the idea that Fort Wayne should find in some one a competent historian. Few points in all the west furnish more interesting material.

## LECTURE.

The formation of the Presbyterian Historical Society by the general assembly has already induced many valuable contributions to the early religious history of the country. Its object is commended by the highest considerations. If the commencement and growth of our material prosperity are worthy of an enduring record, much more the early struggles and labors for the establishment of a *religious* and *moral* influence, by which alone this prosperity can be sanctified and blessed. The christian citizen will ever turn to the church of his choice as an institution claiming affectionate regard, and its history, even back to the feeble beginning, will ever possess the highest interest.

The place in which Providence has cast our lot, has claims upon the historian. Fort Wayne is historic ground. It has reminiscences extending back a hundred and seventy years. Dillon, the historian of Indiana, was led to believe from his researches that it was often visited by the early French explorers before the year 1700, and thought a trading post was established here prior to 1719.\* Vaudrenil, then Governor of Louisiana, writing in 1751, mentioned Fort Miami at this point. It was a small stockade fort, built by the French, and situated near the St. Marys, probably in the vicinity of the canal aqueduct. The dim outlines of this fort ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> traced by Wayne in 1794 and by Col. John Johnston in 1800.

The appointment of Col. Johnston as Indian agent here in 1800, by the second President, John Adams, signalized the practical assertion of civil government by the United States at this remote outpost. He was a gentleman of intelligence and great moral worth. With his family, he lived in the Fort some twelve or thirteen years,

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\* If Judge Law be correct in fixing 1710 for the settlement at Vincennes, we can scarcely err in claiming at least as early a date for the trading post here. The progress of the traders and missionaries was from Canada. A report of La Salle, written probably in 1682, mentions the route by the Maumee and Wabash as the most direct to the Mississippi. It is improbable that the French would pass this thronged center of the Mianies (sometimes called Twightwees in their early history,) at the carrying place between these rivers, without establishing here one of that cordon of military posts designed to connect their Canadian and Mississippi settlements.

and then retired to his farm on the Big Miami, two miles above Piqua, soon after the commencement of the war of 1812 with England. Among the children of Col. Johnston born in the Fort here was one who afterwards became the wife of John D. Jones, a prominent citizen of Cincinnati. Mrs. Jones, a few years ago, visited Fort Wayne to see the old Fort, and was welcomed by the citizens, both on her own account and the memory of her respected pioneer father.

Gen. John E. Hunt, a well known business man of the Maumee valley, a State Senator in early times, and brother-in-law of Lewis Cass, was also born in the old Fort in 1798. He died at Toledo in 1877, aged seventy-nine years.

The Junction of these rivers, the St Marys and the St. Joseph, justly claim a page in the annals of that momentous contest between French and English civilization—between Romanism and Protestantism—which was waged with alternating success, and with short intervals of repose, for more than a hundred years, terminating soon after the fall of Quebec, in the establishment of British supremacy by the treaty of 1763. The massacre of the little English garrison, three-fourths of a mile north from the site of this church, on the 27th of May, 1763, during Pontiac's war, was accomplished through the treacherous influence of French traders over the Indians. This was among the last exertions of French power on this continent east of the Mississippi. It was a subsiding wave on the outer circle of the long agitated waters. This Fort stood on the east bank of the St. Joseph, near its mouth. Its capture was accomplished through the deceit of an Indian girl, the instrument of those older in dissimulation. Under pretense of the dangerous sickness of an Indian woman, the English commandant was prevailed upon by this girl, in whom he had confidence, to venture out of the Fort for the relief of the woman. On approaching the designated wigwam, he was pierced by two rifle balls, shot from behind its cover, and fell dead upon the ground. Col. Johnston says: "I often saw the aged squaw who slew the English commandant," referring to the woman

who in her youth was made the agent in treacherously beguiling him to his death.

The aim of this sketch does not permit us to dwell upon the great contest closed in 1763. Yet from this advanced stand-point, looking backward a hundred and twenty years, we cannot fail to perceive that in its results were involved the institutions, civil and religious, of all this immense region from the Lakes to the Gulf, and from the Allegheny range to the Rocky mountains. Two variant civilizations had been confronted for two generations in conflict for the possession of a continent. What, if at the siege of Quebec, the key to the St. Lawrence and the Lake region, the arms of Catholic France, instead of Protestant England, had prevailed? What, if over all this western country, soon to shape the nation's destiny, Romanism had been ever since striking its roots deep into this virgin soil?

The bare suggestion is enough to impress strongly any observing mind, with the limited progress the French have made in their efforts to colonize and possess distant lands, in contrast with our vigorous Anglo-Saxon people, in the front column of whose advancing civilization are ever found the school master a free press,\* and an open Bible. It is stated that at the present time there are from 150,000,000 to 200,000,000 of Bibles and parts of the Bible in print throughout the world, in 226 different languages and dialects. The number is doubtless from five to ten fold greater in the English than in all other languages together. So likewise with the printing press, another great power of our times. Of the millions of sheets falling daily from the press in all lands, an overshadowing proportion is in our tongue. In no other language is the press free. No where except in our English speaking countries has liberty, civil and religious, more than a stunted growth. She seems to have chosen our own mother tongue in which to chronicle her persistent, earnest struggles and her sublime triumphs. It has been aptly styled the

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\* Under French rule in Canada, from the founding of Quebec in 1608, to the treaty of cession in 1763, no village school was ever established, nor a single printing press set up.—*Bancroft*.



"Missionary language;" it is also the language of progress and of free institutions.

From these facts, with the amazing increase and diffusion of the Anglo-Saxon race, the conjecture has been plausibly maintained that the Christian religion, Christian civilization, and Christian literature, are to spread over the earth mainly through the English language—British commerce, sometimes backed by British arms, preparing the way in one direction, as in India, and American enterprise and progress on this continent and the islands about us. How signally and sadly would North America have failed in preparation for her part of this august mission, had French power, ideas and civilization, and not the English, been dominant in this western domain for the past hundred years !

We know that by translation chiefly can the Bible be made known to existing generations of the heathen. Yet in an extended view, reaching far into the future, there is ground for large expectation and cheering hope in the gradual diffusion among the nations of the English language, carrying with it to the understanding of men, not only the Bible, but the great ideas and the genius of Christianity and Christian civilization, so interwoven with the entire fabric of English literature. Every missionary station with its school; every establishment for legitimate American or British commerce, is an entering wedge for the language and for the race. It is the infusing of a vivifying element whose spreading influence must tend to quicken the inert mass.\* In view of this co-operative mission among the nations of lower culture, may we not reasonably hope that these English speaking nations, at least as against each other, have fought out their last war; and that in their plans of progress and territorial acquisition, peaceably or by conquest, their advances hereafter will run in concurrent, non in conflicting lines?

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\* "The translation of the Bible into the tongues of nations of low moral training has been found a matter of exceeding difficulty. \* \* \*

"English is emphatically the language of commerce, of civilization, of social and religious freedom, of progressive intelligence, of active catholic philanthropy; and therefore, beyond any tongue ever used by man, it is of right the cosmopolitan speech."—*Marsh's Lectures on the English Language.*

See also appendix note A.



Though Wolfe and Montcalm may not have understood it—as men seldom understand the part they act in the comprehensive plans of Providence—yet the long-pending conflict which they decided on the Heights of Abraham is now seen to have been a war for the establishment of British authority and the spread of the English language and protestantism on this continent. We can scarcely, however, resist the belief that perceptions of unwonted clearness were given to these brave commanders, as their noble spirits passed together from the battle-field. Wolfe, when aroused from the death stupor by the thrilling words, “The French give way everywhere,” though a few days before, with enfeebled constitution contemplating an early natural death with dismay, recovered strength to say, “Now God be praised, I die happy.” Was some bright vision of the future achievements and glory of the Anglo-Saxon race in the new world vouchsafed just as life ebbed away? And Montcalm, on being told by the surgeon that he could live but a few hours, replied: “So much the better; I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec.” Was a glimpse into the far future opened up just at the close of his prolonged, heroic struggle for his beloved France, presenting to his dying vision, with oppressive vividness, the waning of the Gallic race on this continent? However this may be, the fact to us is palpable, that mighty influences were set to work by the decision of that old French and English war.\* In far-reaching results, the earth has witnessed no contest comparable to it in all its annals.

Four nations, at different periods, have held dominion here. For nearly half a century prior to the conquest of Canada, in 1763, the French flag waved at the meeting of the St. Joseph and St. Marys. The French adapted their manners and character to forest life. Schoolcraft says the Indians of the northwest often referred to “the days of French supremacy as a kind of golden era, when

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\* Hon. Samuel F. Vinton, in arguing the question of boundary between Virginia and Ohio, maintained conclusively that, according to the law of nations, the claim of France to the valleys of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi, founded on discovery and occupation, was *perfect*, and that of England, based on her colonial possessions along the Atlantic slope, not even a *respectable pretense*. The sword seems, therefore, to have been the only arbiter which could have given this vast country to English civilization.

all things in their affairs were better than they now are." Then came the English in December, 1760,† and the British flag was run up in its stead. Their manners were reserved and haughty, far less adapted than the genial, pliant and vivacious French to win the confidence of the Indians. In no particular is there greater dissimilarity in the two nations. The French, like the Spaniards, readily meet a lower civilization upon an intermediate platform, as in Canada and Mexico. The genuine Anglo-Saxon takes no step downward. English society in Calcutta is as select and high-toned as in London. To elevate, near to its own level, or else to destroy by gradual encroachment and pressure, seems to be their mission among the sluggish and decaying nations. Whether or not the Indian sagacity was adequate to a full perception of these diverse tendencies, certain it is that the *Miamies* of that day were haters of the English. In less than three years the British flag was lowered here, and its proud, defiant folds trailed in the dust.\* The conspiracy of Pontiac—greatest of the red race, in genius, force of character, and statesman-like combination—had done its work. Nine of the twelve English forts in the northwest, scattered from Presque Isle (now Erie) to Green Bay, and from Mackinaw to Ojibway (near Lafayette) were captured in the space of a few weeks. Only Detroit, Fort Pitt, and Green Bay, successfully resisted the simultaneous attack. Thence forward for thirty-one years, as in the preceding century, the barbarian power and glory of the *Miamies*‡ at this point was unchecked, until the advent of Wayne, in 1794. To the Indians, as to us, it was a chosen central home and place of thronged concourse. Here the tribes and bands gathered in council for war or for peace.§ History attests their attachment to it. Their appeal at the Greenville treaty in 1795, after their country had been con-

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† Detroit was surrendered to the English forces under Major Rogers on the 29th of November, 1760. An officer was then sent southward to take possession of Fort Miami and Ojibway (Waukegan Prairie).—*Parkman*.

\* It was about the period of these stirring changes, that the leading Miami chief, Richardville, was born under "the Big Apple tree," which stood some sixty rods from the supposed site of this old British fort. This tree is now gone, but in 1860 it was yet standing, eleven feet in circumference, connecting the memories of the past century with the present.

‡ See appendix note B.

§ This place was called *Ke-ki-on-gay* in the Miami dialect: *Ke-ki-ouge* in the Pottawattamie.

quered, for permission still to occupy this spot, was touching. Little Turtle spoke of this carrying place as "that glorious gate which your younger brothers had the happiness to own, and through which all the good words of our chiefs had to pass from the north to the south, and from the east to the west." But we must not forget that the earth is for cultivation, not permanently for the chase. For great and beneficent providential ends—the greatest good to the greatest number—civilization and religion were to be introduced, and the red man has passed away. Under American rule has risen this beautiful city of some thirty thousand inhabitants, with railroads and telegraphs, churches and free schools.

A modern writer says: "Indolence, prodigality, and want of forethought, are sufficient causes why men and nations should forfeit their right in the soil as the patrimony from God." Without entering upon these deep mysteries, it is nevertheless plain that the occupation of this part of the continent by a people who would develop its long dormant resources, was, just at that period, demanded by the economical, social and moral necessities of the world. Much as we may pity the poor Indian; little as we should palliate the severity, often needless, with which he has been driven back; yet we may not question the All-wise disposings which gave this fertile land to a race that is making it the granary of the world, and will fit it by the close of this century, for the abode of eighty millions of people, exhibiting the highest type of christian civilization.

The expedition of La Balm against Detroit in August or September, 1780, also connects Fort Wayne, by memorials written in blood, with the war of the Revolution. This daring forest chieftain, with earnest sympathy for the American cause, and, we must think, with more zeal than knowledge, collected at Kaskaskia and Vincennes, about an hundred men, and set out for the capture of Detroit, then in possession of the British. The signal achievement of Col. George Rogers Clark, a few months before, in taking Vincennes, then a British fort, with one hundred and seventy men, no doubt incited to this daring adventure. Seizing the goods of British traders at Fort Wayne on his march, the Miamis, instigated by the English, at-

tacked his encampment on the *River Aboite*, 11 miles south-west.\* In this battle LaBalm's little army, with few exceptions, was entirely cut off.

The sagacious mind of Washington, at an early period, had fixed upon the junction of these rivers, as of commanding importance for a strong military post, and the main purpose of the campaign of 1791, was its occupation as a centre of military operations for the North West. The instructions to General St. Clair were prepared under his special direction. His plans contemplated a garrison here of one thousand to twelve hundred men, including the communications. The defeat of St. Clair's army, when within two day's march of this place—a defeat more disastrous than that of Braddock—marred all his well matured plans for the defense of the North West. The news of this terrible reverse furnished the occasion on which Washington, for once in his life, is said to have been overcome by an ungovernable burst of passion. As the scene is described by Irving, his wrath was tremendous. His private secretary who alone was present, was awed into silence by the appalling tones in which the torrent of invective was poured fourth. "It's all over!" said he, "St. Clair's defeated—routed!" His equanimity was soon restored, and Washington was himself again. But the important national objects hinging upon this campaign, and on the military occupation of this point, as they lay in Washington's mind, are thus revealed. We need not marvel that his great soul was stirred to its inmost depth. A favorite military plan had disgracefully failed for the second time. Out of an army of fifteen hundred, nine hundred had been cut off. Kentucky and western Pennsylvania were in mourning for the slain. A thousand miles of defenceless frontier were thrown open to the merciless savages, rendered more savage and merciless, by this second repulse of the the American army, in its attempts to occupy this, their favorite place of rendezvous, the Federal city of the tribes forming the Miami confederacy. This success, following the defeat of Harmar's army the year before,

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\*This encampment of La Balm was near what was afterward the village of White Raccoon, a Miami Chief.

whose battle-field was within rifle shot of this church building, had emboldened the Indians to believe that a final overthrow of the "pale faces" was quite within their power. Great was the consternation on the frontier. The Presbytery of Red Stone, then the only Presbytery west of the mountains, in view of these calamities past and impending, appointed a day of fasting and prayer throughout their then extended bounds.

Harmar's principal engagement was on the tongue of land between the St. Joseph and Maumee rivers, the site of the main Indian village. The carnage was especially terrific in the conflict that took place in the bed of the St. Joseph river near its mouth, and also in the retreat of the Americans across the Maumee, half a mile below the junction, still known as Harmar's Ford. The extreme point of land just below the mouth of the St. Joseph, now so attractive in rural peaceful beauty, is said to have been the accustomed place for burning prisoners.\* In 1790, before Harmar's campaign, Mr. Gamelin was sent by Gov. St. Clair to the Indians here as a peace commissioner. Three days after he left this point, about the first of May, as if in savage derision of the overtures of the United States Government, an American was brought here and burned.†

The campaign of 1794—the third under Washington's administration, directed to this central point of Indian strength—was successful. After defeating the Indians at the Rapids of the Maumee, Gen. Wayne selected here a commanding site, and in October of that year, Fort Wayne was completed and placed under the command of Major Hamtramck. Thence forward peace reigned on this frontier, until the war with England in 1812. From the erection of the Fort here, eighty-seven years ago, this has been a center of American civilization and influence.

Col. John Johnston, of Ohio, now deceased, whose active and useful life was connected with three generations, wrote, in November, 1859, to a member of this church, as follows :

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\* These statements were made to some of our older citizens by Chief Richardville, Mr. Peltier, and others. See appendix note C.

† Dillion's History.

"I was appointed in the Indian Department in 1800, and stationed at Fort Wayne. My habitual station was there for twelve or thirteen years. There was not a Protestant clergyman of any denomination that performed divine service at that post during the time stated.

\* \* \* The only officer of the army, within my knowledge, who publicly professed Christianity, was Col. Vose, who commanded at Fort Wayne about the year 1816 or 1817. This noble Christian soldier was in the constant practice of assembling his men on the Sabbath day to read the scriptures and converse with them relative to their duties and the salvation of their souls—a rare instance of Christian fidelity and the power of divine grace. I never knew to what denomination he belonged. The conduct of such a man and under such circumstances can only be appreciated by persons familiar with the allurements and temptations of military life. \* \* \* The nearest white settlement was Hamilton, county, Ohio, and the post office, Cincinnati, two hundred miles distant from this post. Fifty-eight years ago it took twenty-seven days on horseback from Fort Wayne to Washington City, and now the distance can be traveled by rail in two days."

The desire naturally arises here to learn further of Col. Vose, the commencement of whose public history resembles so much in strength of religious purpose that of Havelock, in India, or of Capt. Vicers, who fell so bravely before Sebastopol, only two days after leading the devotions of a public religious meeting in the English camp. As yet, we have only learned, through the departments at Washington, that he died in the army at New Orleans, in 1845, and that he ever maintained the character of "a very correct and honorable man, an excellent officer, without fear and without reproach."\*

When Gen. Harrison, in September, 1812, marched to the relief of the garrison here, then besieged by the Indians, the expedition was accompanied by Rev. Matthew G. Wallace, an honored Presbyterian minister, as Chaplain to the army. If, as may be presumed, he preached to the soldiers while here, his was the first proclamation

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\* A letter afterwards received from Rev. Dr. Kingsbury, missionary among the Choctaw Indians, refers to the after life of Col. Vose. See appendix, note D.



of the gospel in Protestant form, on this ground. Mr. Wallace died at Terre Haute, his home.

Though not strictly within the range of this history, yet in any record of early religious effort at Fort Wayne, the work of Rev. Isaac McCoy, of the Baptist church, must not be omitted. From May, 1820, to December, 1822, he resided here, preaching the gospel, and maintaining a Mission School, chiefly for the benefit of the Indians. In August, 1822, a Baptist church was organized at Fort Wayne, consisting of the mission family, two Indian women and one black man. Mr. McCoy's faithful and intelligent missionary labors here and elsewhere in the Indian territory, have passed into the published history of the country.

But the distinction of having first preached to the actual settlers of Fort Wayne, according to the distinctive faith and usages of the Presbyterian church, and under ecclesiastical appointment, is due to the Rev. John Ross, a native of Ireland, being familiarly and reverently known throughout the two Synods of Indiana as "Father Ross." This venerable servant of God afterwards died in Tipton county, Indiana, at the age of ninety-three.

In December, 1822, Mr. Ross, then pastor of a church in the New Jersey settlement, on the west side of the Big Miami, opposite the town of Franklin, visited this post, under appointment of the general assembly to labor for three months as a missionary among the destitutions of this frontier region. The settlement here comprised about one hundred and fifty or two hundred souls, including French and half-breed families, mainly engaged in the Indian trade. The nearest white settlement was at Shane's Prairie, forty miles southeast, and except as the trace was dotted with an occasional settler, a day's journey apart, all northwest of Piqua, Ohio, was a wilderness. The missionary took passage in a light two-horse wagon with Matthew Griggs, afterwards, with his family, members of the Fort Wayne church, then of Lebanon, Ohio, and visiting Fort Wayne on a trading expedition, with hats and dried fruit. This incident, though in itself trivial, aptly exemplifies the fact exhibited on a larger scale, in all past history, down to the late commercial treaties be-



tween the great Christian powers and China—that commerce, under the orderings of Providence, is made the means of spreading the gospel over the earth. The ship of commerce carries the missionary to India or China, and the structure of Anglo-Saxon civilization, there maintained for commercial ends, sustains him amid heathenism. Material interests and governmental regulations, though not so designed, thus become the scaffolding on which ministers of the gospel stand while building the spiritual temple.

Father Ross, in a letter dated November 26th, 1859, describes the peril and exposure of the first missionary journey; how their first night's encampment in the woods, a few miles north of Dayton, was made memorable by the howling of wolves on every side; how the snow storm afterwards met them in the wilderness with intense cold, which froze fast in the mud the wheels of their wagon; how, failing to strike fire from the flint, the woodsman's last hope, they were compelled to leave their conveyance under guard of a faithful dog; how, by walking and leading their horses, the cold being too severe to ride, they reached Fort Wayne at a late hour on a wintry night; and with what kindness he was received by one who afterwards became a ruling Elder\* in this church—a kindness, the remembrance of which, after the lapse of forty years, was still fresh in the old missionary's grateful heart.

Father Ross continues: "The next day being the Sabbath, I preached in the Fort morning and afternoon, because there was no other convenient place to preach in. \* \* \* I visited the place five times from 1822 to 1826. I was once sent out to Fort Wayne by the Synod of Ohio."

The business records of the Home Missionary Society furnish the following memorandum of the correspondence of that period:

"Allen Hamilton, post master at Fort Wayne, December 10th, 1828, wrote, saying there had been no minister there since the town was laid off. He urged their claims by saying that the canal is laid off through the place; that there are in the town and immediate

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\* Samuel Hanna.

vicinity, five hundred inhabitants, and no preaching within eighty miles, &c., &c.

In response to this appeal, Rev. Charles E. Furman was appointed a missionary for Fort Wayne. On the 20th of February, 1830, he wrote to the Mission Rooms in New York, from this place, as follows:

"I arrived here on the 13th of November. From this place, one hundred miles in every direction, it is a perfect wilderness. \* \*

This county only contains seven or eight hundred inhabitants, between three or four hundred of whom live in town. I never knew for the same number of inhabitants in any place, so many attendants upon the preaching of the gospel. Without a library, except a very small selection of tracts, I have a small, though interesting, Sabbath School. \* \* \*

There are about seven or eight who have been professors of religion in our church before, and I think a church might now be formed of at least a dozen members. \*

One lady in the place has been, I trust, born into the kingdom. The people are hospitable, and have more intelligence and liberality of feeling than any similar town I have found in the country."

After preaching some six or eight months, Mr. Furman passed on to other fields.

In June, 1831, Rev. James Chute, of the Presbytery of Columbus, visited Fort Wayne, and on the first of July following, at the request of the few Presbyterians then residing here, organized the First Presbyterian church of Fort Wayne, consisting of eleven members. On the 4th of October, 1831, the church was received under care of Miami Presbytery, whose place of meeting was some one hundred and twenty miles distant.

Of the first members of this church, two were half-Indians, who had before, in 1820, joined the Baptist church under the labors of Rev. Mr. McCoy, missionary to the Indians at this post. They were nieces of "Little Turtle," the celebrated war-chief of the Miamis, the force of whose fierce courage, as leader of the savage hosts, our countrymen had felt on this spot in the bloody conflict with Harmar's army, in 1790, and again in the defeat of St. Clair, on the upper Wabash, in 1791. They were daughters of Capt.

Wells, who, at the age of twelve years, had been taken prisoner or rather stolen) in Kentucky and adopted by the Miami tribe.

Of Little Turtle, Col. Johnston thus wrote to me in November, 1859: "Meshekunnoghquoh, or the Little Turtle, was of mixed blood, half Mohican, half Miami. \* \* \* I knew him intimately—the gentleman of his race. He died at Fort Wayne, and was buried, as he deserved, by the commanding officer, with all the honors of war due to his high character and rank." With great propriety, the spot which he so bravely defended against Harmar in 1790, was selected as his burial place.

Capt. Wells fought by the side of his Chief in the memorable battle with St. Clair's army. Afterwards in the time of calm reflection, with dim memories still of his childhood home, of brothers and playmates, he seems to have been harrowed with the thought that amongst the slain by his own hand, may have been his kindred. The approach of Wayne's army in 1794, stirred anew conflicting emotions, based upon indistinct recollections of early ties of country and kindred on the one hand, and existing attachments of wife and children on the other. He resolved to make his history known. With true Indian characteristics, the secret purpose of leaving his adopted nation, was, according to reliable tradition, made known in this manner. Taking with him the war chief, Little Turtle, to a favorite spot on the banks of the Mannec, Wells said: "I now leave your nation for my own people. We have long been friends. We are friends yet, until the sun reaches a certain height, (which he indicated.) From that time we are enemies. Then if you wish to kill me you may. If I want to kill you I may." At the appointed hour, crossing the river, Capt. Wells disappeared in the forest, taking an eastern direction to strike the trail of Wayne's army. Obtaining an interview with Gen. Wayne, he became ever afterward the faithful friend of the Americans,\* though living chiefly with the Miamis until killed in the Chicago massacre in 1812, having gone

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\*At one time Wells was Indian Agent at Fort Wayne, by appointment of the Government.

to that besieged post on a hazardous mission for the relief of his friends.† The daughters of Capt. Wells, Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Hackley, were educated in Kentucky, and are yet kindly remembered by some in this church and community as ladies of refinement and intelligent piety. The house of one of them, Mrs. Ann Turner, standing on the present site of Colerick's Opera House, on Columbia street, was the appointed place of weekly prayer, where blessings were sought upon the little vine planted in the wilderness. They now rest beside their kinsman, the war-chief, in the old orchard near the junction of the rivers.

Of the little flock of eleven, whose names were enrolled at the beginning, all, pastor and people, have passed from the church below, save two ladies.

In all this part of the North-West, from Piqua even to the Selkirk settlement (now Winnipeg) in the British possessions, this, at its organization, was probably the only church of the Presbyterian type.

The want of a place of worship, affording reasonable comfort, was here a chief hinderance of church progress for the first six years. Six or eight different rooms were occupied in succession within this period. The religious services connected with the organization were held in the open air under a rude shelter of boards, near the junction of Columbia and Harrison streets, on ground now occupied by the canal basin. For a time, the little brick school room, about twenty by twenty-five feet, then standing some two hundred feet south-west of the present county jail, in a cluster of sumach shrubbery, was the place of worship. Then the Masonic Hall, on the site of Hill & Orbison's warehouse, a room perhaps, thirty by forty feet, was occupied until driven out in June, 1833, by the advent of

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†The wife of the Commandant at Chicago, is understood to have been Wells' niece.

the first printing press ever set up in north-eastern Indiana, ‡ for whose convenience, we may be assured, it was most willingly yielded by Presbyterians—a people who have ever stood in the front ranks of Protestantism, for the diffusion of knowledge through a free and independent press, and who, we may safely trust, will vindicate this historic claim, by being among the last to yield the freedom of discussion and the untrammelled dissemination of thought, under whatever specious pretext of public good, the encroachment shall come. Next a carpenter's shop on the north side of Columbia street where R. W. Taylor's store-room now stands, was for some length of time the sanctuary. At the close of each week's work, the shop was hastily transformed in its adaption from material to sacred use, by removing the shavings and adjusting the benches, minus their backs, with the work-bench for a pulpit desk. A small room on the opposite side of Columbia street, was for a short time used, as was likewise a room in the old brick tavern, in the same street, on the site of S. Bask's store room. During the summer of 1833, and afterwards in 1835 and 1836, the old brick Court House, long since gone to decay, was occupied as a place of worship. One ~~one~~ Sabbath, now distinctly remembered, if not on more than one occasion, the congregation were compelled after the services had commenced to go forth from one of their humble sanctuaries, and were seen following their pastor, with bible and hymn-book in hand, in search of a place of less discomfort; having been sorely persecuted, not by Poye or King, but by the elements, eagerly taking advantage of some outrage, against the laws of practical science, by the chimney builder. Such were the wanderings and adjournings of the little congregation until in 1837, they found a home and resting place in their own church building, the small frame forty feet square, near east end of Berry street.

This history has to-day its counterpart in many a place within the wide range of our advancing settlements, whose appeal for aid to the occupants of cushioned seats, and otherwise pleasant and com-

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‡The Fort Wayne Sentinel, established by Thos. Tigar and S. V. B. Noel.

near  
Harrison

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fortable edifices, needs no eloquence for its enforcement, other than the simple statement of such privation and endurance.

In that little frame church, on what is now the site of the beautiful residence building erected in 1881 by Charles McCulloch, Esq., were organized both the Synod of Northern Indiana and the Presbytery of Fort Wayne, the former in October, 1843, and the latter on the 1st day of January, 1845. Interest was imparted to the occasion of organizing the Synod, by the fact that the opening sermon was preached by a venerable pioneer, Rev. John Wright, of Logansport, who, twenty-nine years before, at Chillicothe, had taken part in the organization of the Synod of Ohio.

That was a period of progress and growth, and the frame church in a short time became too small. The enterprise of erecting the commodious edifice now occupied, was considered as early as 1844. The corner stone was laid by the pastor, Rev. H. S. Dickson, with appropriate religious ceremonies, in October, 1845. The basement of the new building was first occupied for public worship in 1847, and the upper room completed and solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God in November, 1852, with religious services, suited to an occasion of so much interest and joy, to all who loved the sanctuary. The sermon was preached by Rev. Thomas E. Thomas, D. D., then President of Hanover College.

A brief notice of those who have preached the gospel, is appropriate to this historic sketch. The labors of Rev. James Chute were continued in humble, self-denying faithfulness, from the organization of the church till called to his rest on the 28th of December, 1835. His memory is blessed. Following the death of Mr. Chute, the pulpit was supplied, first in 1836, by Rev. Daniel Jones, and after him by Rev. Jesse Hoover, a Lutheran minister, until October, 1837. Rev. Alexander T. Rankin was next invited to this field. He entered on his ministry in October, 1837, and continued to labor here until September, 1843. Rev. William C. Anderson was called to the church in the spring of 1844. Though declining to accept the call, he took charge of the church and preached for some six months, guiding it, under the providence of God, most happily



through the period of its greatest trials and danger. In <sup>then</sup> September, Mr. Anderson's health having failed, a call was forwarded to H. S. Dickson. Mr. D. was installed pastor in November, 1845. Until this time the fixed relationship of pastor and people had not been enjoyed by this congregation—the several ministers having labored as stated supplies. In the fall of 1847, Mr. Dickson having resigned the pastorate, Rev. Lowman P. Hawes supplied the pulpit for about six months. In August, 1848, Rev. J. G. Riheldaffer, then of the graduating class of Princeton Seminary, accepted a call and was installed as pastor, continuing in that relation until he resigned in 1851. In November, 1851, Rev. Jonathan Edwards, D. D., was installed as pastor. He resigned in July, 1855, to accept the Presidency of Hanover College, and was succeeded by Rev. John M. Lowrie, D. D., who was installed in November, 1856. During the vacancy before the settlement of Dr. Lowrie, Rev. J. H. Burns supplied the pulpit for a few months. The pastorate of Rev. Dr. Lowrie continued to the time of his death, September 26, 1867. In March, 1868, Rev. Thomas H. Skimmer, D. D., accepted the call of this congregation. Dr. S. resigned September 18, 1871, to accept a call to Second Presbyterian church, of Cincinnati. February 5, 1872, Rev. D. W. Moffatt, then a pastor at Georgetown, D. C., accepted a call to this church. This is the ninth year of his pastorate.

The total number of admissions to membership in this church since its organization in 1831, has been—on profession of faith, 494; on certificate from other churches, 564; aggregating, 1,058; (adding the seven original members makes 1,065.) The present membership is 395. May, 1844, six members were dismissed at their own request, who with others were then organized as the Second Presbyterian church of Fort Wayne. Again on the second day of December, 1867, thirty-four members were in like manner dismissed for the purpose of being organized as the Third Presbyterian church of Fort Wayne.

For several years after the organization of the church, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists worshipped together, their respective ministers preaching on alternate Sabbaths. The number of church-goers seemed to small too divide. It was with difficulty, moreover,



that even one place of meeting, affording reasonable comfort, could be procured. There are those yet living who can bear grateful testimony to seasons of marked religious enjoyment in the union meetings of that period, held amid these rude surroundings, with so little of the elegance, or even the convenience, with which christian congregations in Fort Wayne are now blessed.

In any sketch of religious progress, efforts for instructing the children in the word of God should by no means be omitted. The first Sabbath school in this place was organized in 1825, fifty-six years ago, by James Hanna, an Elder in the church of Dayton, then on a visit to his children residing here. For some years all protestant denominations united in the work. In 1840 the Methodists and Lutherans, and in 1842, the Baptists, established separate schools in connection with their respective churches. Thus, with some interruptions in the earlier times, this church Sabbath school has continued for over a half century, and with the Sabbath Schools sustained by other churches, not less useful, has contributed materially to the cause of morals and religion in this region.

Nor should the Ladies' Missionary Circle be overlooked. This was instituted at an early period. Many are the instances in which the families of missionaries laboring in the destitute surroundings, have been essentially relieved through their unobtrusive labors. The ladies of the church have also contributed largely through this agency, first and last, towards erecting and furnishing this church building.

Such are some of the incidents in the military and religious history of Fort Wayne. Besides the chain of events bearing strictly upon the progress of the Presbyterian church, other points of historic interest are brought prominently to view.

First, its early occupation by European nations. France and England, each in turn, maintained a garrison here, as an exercise of sovereignty over this part of the continent. Great questions of in-

finite reach, involving dominion, race, language, law,\* and religion, have hung upon the petty display of military power at the junction of these rivers.

Second, the signal success for a time attending the struggles of the Aborigines in repelling the approach of American civilization. No other point was defended with such obstinacy and valor. Successively, La Balm, Harmar and St. Clair, were overwhelmed or driven back by savage courage and strategy. Shall we ascribe more than ordinary vigor and force to the Red men, whose place of rendezvous for war or peace was here? Unquestionably, they were equal to any of the tribes in force and courage. Or, was there a peculiar beauty and adaptedness to Indian life, in the rivers and forests surrounding this old carrying place, inciting to daring deeds for its defense? We are assured that no country ever filled more completely the range of an Indian's wants, or for him possessed more of the attractions of home.

Third, the persistence of the United States Government in establishing and maintaining its power here. Four campaigns, three under Washington's and one under John Adams' administration, were directed to this point.

Fourth, when opened to civilized pursuits, enterprising men were attracted here by business facilities and commanding position. Some of these brought with them an appreciation of religious privileges—the fruits of early training,—and when the missionary came to seek the scattered sheep in the wilderness, were ready to respond by co-operative efforts. The missionary's report in 1830, represents at that date an extraordinary attendance upon the preaching of the gospel. The state of society here at the present

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\*The French Colonists in Canada, long after the introduction of English jurisprudence, were irreconcilably opposed to the trial by jury. A Canadian, testifying before the British House of Commons in 1774, said, "that the Canadians had no clear notions of government, having never been used to any such speculations."—*Dillon's History*.

time, with very much to be amended, in one particular, exemplifies the lasting influence of first settlers upon future character and habits. "As the twig is bent, the tree inclines." Truthfully may it be said, in 1881 as in 1860, we are comparatively a church-going people. In few towns or cities in the west is the population, Protestant and Catholic, in larger proportion found in the sanctuary on the Sabbath than at Fort Wayne.



## APPENDIX.

### NOTE A.

The following, from Fowler's English Grammar, presenting the same general idea in a different form, was first noticed while the foregoing was passing through the press.

"The ancient tendency was to diversity, the modern is to unity of language. And if, in the early ages of the world, causes were in operation elsewhere, as well as on the plains of Shinar, which produced a confusion of tongues in the human race, we are prepared to believe that causes are now in operation which will produce an opposite result.

European and American commerce is finding its way to China and Japan, and to every region where man is found, and is thus making a common medium of intercourse necessary. The missionaries of the cross, in preaching one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God as the father of all, not only are promoting the sense of universal brotherhood through the race, but also the unity of language. Thus we can believe that if "one song shall employ all nations, one language shall be the principal medium of intercourse."

### NOTE B.

From the earliest records, the Miamies have been a leading and influential tribe. Bancroft says: "The Miamies was the most powerful confederacy of the west, excelling the Six Nations. \* \* \* Their influence reached to the Mississippi, and they received frequent visits from tribes beyond that river." Mr Gamelin, the messenger sent by Gov. St. Clair, in April, 1790, to know the mind of the Indians as to peace or war, after reading the Governor's speech to the chiefs and head men, in every village on the route from Vincennes, was everywhere desired to proceed to the Miami town (Ke-ki-on-gay.") They said, "you know that we can terminate nothing without the consent of our brothers—the Miamies." The impress of its name upon so many western rivers, shows the predominance of the tribe. The two Miamies of the Ohio will ever perpetuate it. The Miami of Lake Erie (now Maumee) was likewise named for the tribe. The St. Joseph, of Lake Michigan, was called the "*River Miamies*," when LaSalle erected a fort, and Henepin first raised the cross at its mouth in November, 1679. Our own St. Mary's was marked "*Miamies' river*" on the rude skeleton map, made to represent the western country at the time of Colonel Boquet's expedition in 1763.

### NOTE C.

#### **An Incident in Indian Life at Fort Wayne.**

About seventy years ago a white man was bound to the stake for burning. The mother of the late principal chief of the Miamies, Richardville, (or Pee-jee-wa) herself a daughter of a chief, a woman of great influence in the tribe, had made fruitless efforts to save him. The savages stood around eager for the cruel sacrifice, and the torch was ready to be applied. Richardville, then a young man, had been designated as their future chief, but not yet installed. To him his mother applied, and placing a knife in his hand, bade him assert, at that moment, his chieftainship. Rushing within the infuriated

circle, he cut the cords that bound the white man.—Though chagrined at the escape of their victim, all applauded, as men, savage or civilized will honor a bold and decided character, and his influence and power were from that time established. The kind hearted Miami woman contrived to secrete the white man, sending him down the Maumee in a canoe under a cover of furs and peltries, in charge of some friendly Indians. Many years afterwards, the chief, on a journey to Washington City, stopped at a town in Ohio. A man approached him, throwing his arms around his neck in grateful embrace. It was the rescued prisoner.

These facts are given on the authority of Allen Hamilton, Esq., of Fort Wayne, as they were often related to him by the chief himself.

#### NOTE D.

PINE RIDGE, Choctaw Nation, Feb. 23, 1860.

MR. J. L. WILLIAMS, DEAR SIR:—Your letter of January 28 has just come to hand—Your inquiry respecting Col. Josiah N. Vose, of the United States Army. \* \* \* He was stationed at Fort Towson, in the Choctaw country, from 1832 to 1840. I came to reside in this place in 1836, which is two miles from Fort Towson. During the four years of our residence so near to each other, our intercourse was frequent and most gratifying to myself, and I have reason to think mutually pleasant and profitable.

Col. Vose and Wife were members of the Park Street Church, Boston. By request of Col. Vose, I preached a part of the time at Fort Towson, and the word seemed to be effectual to the salvation of souls. When I took charge of the church here, it was on the very frontier, not only of religion, but of civilization. The church at the time consisted of four members, two of them slaves; and westerly there was not, at that time, another Presbyterian professor of religion between this and the Rocky Mountains. The two first additions to our little church were two Lieutenants from the Fort. One of them, Lieut. Barnwell, from South Carolina, was a son-in-law of Colonel Vose. \* \* \* The other was Lieut. Field, from Buffalo, N. Y. He subsequently married another daughter of Col. Vose. He was killed at the battle of Monterey, Mexico. \* \* \* Gardiner Vose, a son of Col. Vose, is a minister of the gospel, and at this time a professor of rhetoric in Amherst college.

Col. Vose was a consistent Christian gentleman to the day of his death. His example and influence were always for good, over the officers and men under his command. He took a lively interest in our missionary operations, and gave it not only his favor in every practicable way, but also his substantial support. Col. Vose was ever ready to conduct meetings on the Sabbath when I was absent, and to take an active part in prayer meetings, and at the monthly concerts. The influence of such a commander, at a frontier post, among the Indians, is of inestimable value to the country at large.—

\* \* \* More than sixty persons, including officers and their wives, soldiers and camp women, united with the church of which I have been the stated supply. No post on the western frontier, it is confidently believed, has exerted as favorable an influence on the cause of morality and religion as Fort Towson. This is to be ascribed in a good degree to the influence of pious commanders. \* \* \* I shall never cease to give thanks to God for the favor he has shown us through the pious commanders that in his good providence have been stationed at Fort Towson, and in which favor Col. Vose was preeminent. \* \* \*

“Blessed is the man who maketh the Lord his trust;” and blessings descend after him to unborn generations.

Yours truly,

C. KINGSBURY.

## NOTE E.

**On the Ladies' Missionary Work.**

The organization of the Ladies' Home Missionary Circle is alluded to in the preceding historical sketch. The Circle continues its existence and work, but no full record of the amount of its contributions to home missions is attainable.

The Ladies Foreign Missionary Society was organized Dec. 1871.

The ladies of the three Presbyterian churches of this city, met December 18, 1871, and, under the direction of Mrs. Dickson, wife of a former pastor of this church, organized the Fort Wayne auxilliary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, of Philadelphia, and assumed the support of a missionary in China. During the ten years of its existence, \$4874.49 have been collected by the society, of which \$4000.00 have been devoted to the purpose above mentioned and the remainder to the current expenses of the society and gifts to special objects of interest in the missionary field, for which the aid of the society has been solicited.

## NOTE F.

**Our Churches—In 1831 and in 1881—Their Support Then and Now—A Striking Contrast.**

From The Daily News of Jan., 23, 1880.

In cities like this the beginnings of society, religious and social, possess an interest to those who come after. My friend, Abram Barnett, hands me the following church subscription paper, circulated in Fort Wayne fifty years ago, which he recently found among the papers of his father, James Barnett, who at an early period removed from Dayton to this place, and whose wife was a sister of Hon. Sam'l Hanna. Old settlers will remember the firm of Barnett & Hanna as one of the earliest mercantile firms. The town then contained 350 inhabitants. All Protestant denominations worshipped together, and united in calling the first settled minister. The whole town could then only promise to pay a minister \$258, as shown by the following:

## THE SUBSCRIPTION PAPER.

We, the undersigned citizens of Fort Wayne and its vicinity, being very desirous of procuring the services of a resident minister of the Gospel among us, do agree to pay the several sums annexed to our names in aid of the support of Rev. James Chute for one year at this place.

Fort Wayne, July 12th, 1831.

Sam'l Hanna, \$15.00; Allen Hamilton, 7.50; H. Hanna, 10.00; Smallwood Noel, 10.00; David Archer, 5.00; Wm. N. Hood, 10.00.

At this rate as long as he shall live in Fort Wayne.

Z. B. Tenny, 6.00; James Barnett, 20.00; A. L. Davis, 5.00; Wm. Rockhill, 5.00; Sam'l Lewis, 5.00; Abner Gerard, 5.00; R. L. Britton, 2.50; Sam'l Edsall, 5.00; L. G. Thompson, 5.00; Ann Turner, 10.00; Wm. Suttentfield, 2.00; Sam'l Brown, 2.00; Thos. Daniels, 5.00; James McIntosh, Jr., 1.00; James Daniels, 5.00; Philip Klinger, 10.00; James D. Klinger, 5.00; John D. Klinger, 5.00; Wm. Caster, 3.00.

If he should remain a citizen.

Robert Hood, 15.00; H. Rudisill, 5.00; J. H. Griggs, 7.00; Rebecca Hackley, 5.00; Mathew Griggs, 10.00; Mason M. Meriam, 5.00; John Jeffcoat, 5.00. Hill & Henderson, 5.00; Lewis H. Davis, 10.00; Isaac Patterson, 1.00; Francis



Alexander, 2.00; Hiram Weese, 2.00; Simon Edsall, 2.00; John B. Dubois, 5.00; Charles S. Griggs, 5.00; Wm. Wilson, 5.00; Lewis Armstrong, 2.00; John McIntosh, 5.00.

Of these 44 leading men in 1831, only Simon Edsall is living in 1881. It is gratifying, however, to state that some half dozen or more estimable ladies who, in 1831, were wives, respectively, of some of the above subscribers, are still with us.

Mr. W. P. Cooper, recently appointed by our city council to compile statistics, whose report may be seen in all the city papers, sums up the total church membership in the eleven distinct denominations in Fort Wayne, at the present time, as 11,357; and the value of church structures at \$472,100. Quite a wholesome contrast.

Fort Wayne, in 1831, had no church buildings, large or small. The writer attended his first Sabbath service here in June, 1832, in the back room of Judge Hanna's store, (Mr. Chute being the preacher.) Afterwards one of the places of public worship was the Masonic Hall, on the site now occupied by S. Bash & Co's warehouse. The building was a two story brick, severely plain, probably 24 by 30 feet, and when contrasted with the splendid Masonic Temple, now in course of erection, is dwarfed into extreme insignificance in its proportions.

Among the 44 citizens uniting in the call for a resident minister in 1831, are names that will be recognized over the State. They were men of mark. In their day they were known prominently in public affairs—men of enterprise and force of character. Indeed to reach this point at that period, through the fifty miles of wilderness surrounding us on every side, required force of character and "push." Merchandise reached us in pirogues (large canoes,) forced up against the Maumee current by manual labor applied "from the shoulder;" while the flour and bacon came down the St. Mary's, (if it did come at all,) in similar crafts, with many nights encampment on its banks. The sluggish current of this stream and its tedious meanderings, required of boatmen the exercise of two, at least, of the cardinal christian graces, Patience and Hope, for the voyage was long and cheerless.

In 1831 no church of Presbyterian order had been organized between Piqua, on the Big Miami, and the Selkirk settlement so called, on the Red River of the north, now Manitoba, at which point a few Scotchmen had formed a settlement and organized a Presbyterian church. J. L. WILLIAMS.

Fort Wayne, Jan. 23. 1880.

#### NOTE G.

Totals of members received and moneys contributed to benevolence by the church and of congregational expenditures for the last ten years; taken from the reports of April, 1872, to April, 1881, inclusive:

##### MEMBERS RECEIVED.

Number received on examination,	- - - - -	113
" " certificate,	- - - - -	106

##### CONTRIBUTIONS TO OBJECTS OUTSIDE THE CONGREGATION.

Home Mission Board,	- - - - -	\$6,108
Foreign " - - - - -	- - - - -	5,869
Education, - - - - -	- - - - -	1,480
Publication, - - - - -	- - - - -	533
Church Erection, - - - - -	- - - - -	3,077
Ministerial Relief; - - - - -	- - - - -	1,528
Missions to Freedmen, - - - - -	- - - - -	729
Sustentation, - - - - -	- - - - -	514
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Miscellaneous, including Bible Society, Tract Society, &c.	4,514	\$19,838
		<hr/>
General Assembly, - - - - -	305	24,352
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Congregational Expenditures including poor of Congregation, &c., &c., - - - - -	60,003	24,657
		<hr/>
Total for Ten Years, - - - - -		84,660



